

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KABUL 01525 260455Z
ACTION TRSE-00

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6723
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USUN NEW YORK 705

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 1525

MANILA FOR USREP, ADB; PARIS FOR DEA

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FAR, EFIN, AF, UN
SUBJECT: ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK PREPARED TO ASSIST UNFDAC'S
UPPER HELMAND OPIUM ERADICATION PROJECT

1. ON FEBRUARY 22, MR. ROBERT H. BYRNES (AN AUSTRALIAN), VISITING OPERATIONS MANAGER FROM THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, INFORMED EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT THE ADB HAS DECIDED TO "PICK UP THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE" PORTION OF UNFDAC'S UPPER HELMAND OPIUM ERADICATION PROJECT IN THE WEST KAJAKAI REGION. THIS WOULD BE THE INITIAL INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENT OF DEMETRE'S PROJECT (E.G., IRRIGATION FACILITIES). BYRNES AGREES WITH DEMETRE THAT THE COSTS OF THE FIRST ELEMENT SHOULD TOTAL SOME 7.5 MILLION DOLLARS. IF THE ADB NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE SERAJ PROJECT GO AHEAD ON SCHEDULE, THE LOAN FOR WEST KAJAKAI WILL BE READY IN 1980.

2. ACCORDING TO BYRNES, THE ADB IS NOT CONVINCED THAT DEMETRE'S
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KABUL 01525 260455Z

PLAN TO INTRODUCE SOYBEANS AS A REPLACEMENT IS NECESSARILY GOING TO WORK IN A REGION WHERE THAT CROP HAS NOT BEEN TRADITIONALLY GROWMBM HE THOUGHT THAT BEING ABLE TO SOW LARGER AND BETTER CROPS OF COTTON AND WHEAT WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO ENTICE WEST KAJAKAI FARMERS AWAY IROM OPIUM PRODUCTION. IF UNFDAC WANTS TO TRY OTHER CASH CROPS, HOWEVER, THAT IS ZHEIR BUSINESS, OBSERVED BYRNES, WHO REPEATED THAT THE ADB IS ONLY COVERING THE

INFRAYMRUCTURE COSTS. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT UNFDAC WOULD BE LOOKING FOR OTHER DONORS FOR THE OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE DEMETRE PLAN.

3. BYRNES CALLED WEST KAJAKAI A "GOOD SMALL PROJECT" WHICH SHOULD PRODUCE SOLID ECONOMIC RESULTS. THERE ARE NO LARGE LANDOWNERS THERE -- ONLY SMALL FARMERS WHO POSSESS AN AVERAGE HOLDING OF 7.9 HECTARES. BECAUSN WATER IS CURRENTLY SCARCE IN THAT AREA, ONLY ABOUT THREE HECTARES PER FATM CAN BE CULTIVATED. THE INSTALLATION OF A GRAVITY AND PMP IRRIGATION SYSTEM SHOULD PERMIT ALMOST COMPLETYEUTILPDATION OF THE ARABLE LAND AND MEASURABLY IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC LOT OF THE PEOPLE THERE.

4. BYRNES SAID THAT ADB WOULD OPERATE THE WEST KAJAKAI PROJECT AREA SEPARATELY FROM THEIR LARGER PROJECT DOWNSTREAM IN THE WEST SERAJ REGION. THAJE WAS TOO GREAT A DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM (CA. 60 KILOMETERS) FOR EFFECTIVE JOINT CONTROL AS A SINGLE "PACKAGE."

5. REFERRING TO THE RURAL ECTRIFICATION PROPOSALS FOR THE WEST KAJAKAI, BYRNES SAID THAT THE ADB WOULD NOT WANT TO INSTALL A HIGHER LEVEL OF IMPROVEMENTS THERE THAN THEY WERE PLANNING FOR THEIR SERAJ PROJECT. THEREFORE, THE ADB WILL NOT CONTRIBUTE TO ANYTHING MORE THAN THE ELECTRIFICATION NEEDED FOR MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENTS, SUCH AS IRRIGATION PUMPS. THE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KABUL 01525 260455Z

ADB IS CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF BECOMINGINVOLVED IN THE INSTALLATION OF A THIRD GENERATOR AT THE KAJAKAI DAMN HOWEVER -- AND MIGHT ASSIST IN THIS PARTICULAR PROJECT IF THE CITY OF KANDAHAR IMPROVES ITS MUNICIPALELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM. RYM BYRNES REPORTED THAT THE ADB IS ACTIVELY CONSIDERING THE QUESTION OF ANTI-OPIUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN AFGHANISTAN. HE THOUGHT THAT THE ADB WOULD PREFER NOT TO INCLUDE SUCH CLAUSES AS A PART OF ITS PROJECT AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN, BUT THAT IT MIGHT UTILIZE SIDELETTERS LIKE THOSE EMPLOYED BY THE USG HERE. THE EMBASSY OFFICERS STRESSED THE NEED FOR SUCH RESTRICT IONS WHERE AMERICAN TAXPAYERS' MONEY IS BEING USED TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL ACREAGE OR IMPROVE EXISTING FARMLANDS.

7. BYRNES WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT DEMETRE WOULD DEFINITELY BE VISITING THE ADB AT MANILA EARLY IN MARCH. ELIOT

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